

CHESHIRE HIKE 2018

Advice for Hikers

Hike Date	14 – 15 April 2018
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Equipment

Carefully plan what you intend to take on the Hike. It is far too easy to end up with too much kit, or to pack it badly resulting in a wet sleeping bag. You will be hiking and carrying all your camping equipment so you need read this advice very carefully.

General

- Keep the Weight down! You cannot start with more than the weight below. **However, all teams should try and get below 10kg per person.**
 - Junior may carry up to 11.4kg
 - Inters may carry up to 12.5kg
 - Senior and Senior plus may carry up to 13.6kg
- All items should be clearly marked with the Scout's name, having spent a small fortune on your own or troop equipment, it's a pity to lose it. The average amount of untraceable kit left each year fills two bin bags. Use a permanent marker and put your name on everything. That way we can go through the records to trace you;
- Please read separate sheet.

Clothes

- Generally – Hiking in dark coloured or camouflage type clothing is not ideal, wear clothing that makes you visible to motorists and leaders looking for you;
- Boots – You need strong, waterproof boots with firm soles and ankle support. Don't buy new boots 2 weeks before the Hike, blisters are the reason for 90% of retirees, get them now and wear them in;
- Walking socks – Good socks are your friend...your normal school or football socks are not meant for this many hours on your feet. Decathlon and Go Outdoors both sell quality hiking socks at reasonable prices, choose a pair that fit well and make sure you have cut your toenails a few days before the Hike;
- Waterproof jacket – A full and proper waterproof jacket designed for all-day out in the rain use is very important. Normal, street jackets eventually let the rain in. Gore-Tex is good but other brands such as eVent are just as good nowadays and can be better value. Look for taped seams and guaranteed dryness, make sure it has a hood;
- Waterproof Trousers – Just get the cheap, pack-away ones that come in a little bag;
- Tops – Wear and take mixed layers of clothing. Start with a non-cotton base layer that wicks sweat away from the skin. These don't need to be expensive, cheap running tops or dedicated hiking base layers all work. Next add a fleece type top then think if you need more, an extra hoodie or similar can be handy at the base camp.
- Trousers – The uniform Scout activity trousers are the best type for something like this. They are tough, comfortable, dry well and even have a map pocket! Bring along a spare pair just in case you get wet. Only change if you really need to. If it is really cold or the forecast is bad then think about a base layer on your legs too. Jeans are NOT appropriate for any Scouting activity – they get very wet and very cold;
- Spares – You will need a change of footwear for base camp and finish, not big heavy trainers, have you got sandals, crocs or flip-flops? ;
- Just in case – A warm hat and gloves are essential! ;
- Be bold – start cold, after 5 minutes of walking with a big pack you will be warm... but make sure you have tops in your bag;
- Gaiters – Crossing streams can let water in the top of your boots, these are optional as many people don't like them.

Kit

- Rucksack – Something to carry your kit safely while both hands are free and the load is not swinging around. Bring the smallest possible sack that you can get your kit into. A waist strap is essential to reduce the weight on your shoulders. Rucksacks are usually not waterproof so either put everything in small carrier bags or use a black bin liner. Try it on for comfort when it's packed and adjust to your size, it's a lot of trouble to adjust when you're hiking;
- Wash Kit – Yes, you need to actually wash! Bring a toothbrush with the paste already on and wrapped in cling film. You only need a small bit of soap too. Try Life venture soap sheets or, even better, a travel pack of baby wipes. You need a towel in case you get wet generally but make it small. Special camp towels work well as they are light;
- First Aid kit: Bring a couple of plasters that you are not allergic to. Compeed – or other blister packs are strongly recommended. If you get a blister then these are amazing. When you put them on, be sure to massage the plaster for a couple of minutes to make sure it's well stuck;
- Walking poles – these are used by some people to make the walk more comfortable. Poles spread the weight of your rucksack and make walking easier;
- Sleeping bag – Go for a lightweight synthetic bag, its only one night and you can sleep fully dressed if it gets chilly;
- Sleeping mat – essential piece of kit, available from supermarkets nowadays. Thermarest type mats are the best;
- Sun Cream just in case;
- A mug for a hot drink!

Packing

- Hikers should pack their own bag – tell parents to stay away! ;
- Sleeping bags should be secured inside the rucksack, don't tie them on the outside; you want a dry sleeping bag! ;
- Black bin bags are not suitable for bedding rolls as they tear very easily, with the result that the contents get lost or soiled in transit. Please find something stronger;
- Pack your food at the top so it doesn't get squished – top pouch if you have one;
- Next near the top should be your waterproofs – it is England after all! ;
- Keep your tent where you can get it without hauling everything else out.

Food

- Drinks – water is available at all Check Points, so you do not need to carry a lot, just a 500ml bottle, keep the weight down! ;
- Your evening meal needs to be substantial, dehydrated meals are good because they weigh very little. , They need to be reconstituted properly and heated/cooked adequately. Top this up with a pudding and hot chocolate;
- Breakfast – A good Breakfast is definitely needed, I suggest sausages and a pre buttered bap or pitta, pitas don't get squashed. Some people don't like a hot breakfast, cereal is fine but milk is heavy and awkward, how about a range of breakfast bars? ;
- Lunch - Sandwiches for the lunches are fine but don't expect them to be the same shape as normal! Pittas and wraps can work well;
- Keep food sealed to prevent ants and other insect life from munching on your food;
- Don't strain the hot water from pasta etc. directly on to the ground as the heat will kill the grass? Strain the water into something like an Ortlieb folding bucket. When you've finished the meal all the washing up goes into it. The wastewater can then be tipped out before adding clean for washing up.

Cooking

Normally you have a choice between a Trangia or a gas stove, whatever your group has available. Solid fuel stoves are generally not suitable along with petrol Stoves they are not allowed. If you are using a Trangia then:

- Leave the kettle at home – save the weight;
- Only bring the pots you need to cook for your menu;
- Keep the fuel in a proper fuel bottle and only bring what you need;
- Do not refill the stove when it is lit or warm!

If you have a gas stove then:

- Make sure you have a flat, stable spot to cook on;
- Bring a wind-shield;

- Bring a full canister that should last for the menu you have planned plus a spare;
- If you suspect a gas leak then warn others to turn off their stoves immediately and inform the Buddy and retire from the area.

Whatever stove you have:

- Do not cook inside the tent;
- Do not cook in the porch of the tent.

Tent

- This is often the heaviest item on the list. Bring the lightest tent that you can find. If your scout group is lucky enough to have light weight tents then you're rocking! If not, ask around other scout groups to see what kit can be borrowed. Maybe the Explorers have some? The Vango Banshee 200 /Coleman Bedrock are good example tent that weight less than 1.5kg per person when shared and can be found for about £50. Could the group look at buying some? ;
- If you can, get a tent with a porch so you can have space to leave your wet kit;
- If your tent uses 6 pegs to pitch then bring 6 spare pegs, just in case;
- Pop-up type tents are not suitable for hiking as they cannot be packed and carried for long walks.

Using Your Tent

- Point the narrowest bit of your tent to the wind;
- Peg out the guy ropes – it pulls out the tent and improves ventilation;
- Never let the inner bit of your tent get wet, take water proofs off in the porch;
- If your rucksack is wet the leave it in the porch too;
- Don't wear boots in the inner tent – you just get it wet and dirty then have to lie in it;
- Be tidy and organised within your tent and get into a routine. Have a usual place for everything, that way it will be less of a mess and it is easier to find things in the dark;
- Have a torch in a regular place so that it can be found in the night;
- Try and pack your tent away dry;
- Remember to always zip up the inner door while you are out, unless you like insects in your tent;
- Some tents let in water if you touch the inside of the tent while it's raining, try not to!

Before you join the hike

All the hikers (that means you) need to be good at reading maps, plotting routes and actual navigation. The Ordnance Survey has some great [online training resources](#). With your Troop you must spend time on training in map reading skills and get out for some practice hikes using your map reading skills.

Plotting your route

Hikers must be able to take a set of grid references, know what they mean and plot them on a map. On the day, plot as a team, one select the Easting's and the other the Northings then bring your lines together. Use a permanent fine point pen or a highlighter (don't forget to bring it) to show your route, mark so that you can still see paths and roads. A circle around the point works well. If you draw over the path then you won't be able to see which way to go properly. Practise, plotting and joining up the references.

This will be essential this year as teams will be deducted 50 points if you do not plot the references up to at least the second Check Point (around 12 grid references) in the allotted time of 5 Minutes.

Practice Outdoors

Practice setting a map outdoors and taking compass bearings outdoors, either of these should take no more than 20 seconds and will save you time in the long run.

Things Scouts Should Know

All the hikers should be able to:

- Set a map to the way they are facing;
- Relate the symbols on the map to what they see around them;
- Estimate how long it will take them to walk a section (15-20 minutes per km, about the width of a square on the 1:25k map);
- Find North;
- Take a bearing from a map route and walk in that direction;
- Walk in the right direction!

Hiking Skills

On the Day

- Keep a steady pace, don't go too fast or too slow, aim for 15-20 minutes per km, keep your energy for the long walk;
- Keep your head up and your eyes open. Observation signs are worth at least 60 points each and there could be as many as 18 on Junior Saturday route. They are not hidden, but are usually placed for you to miss if you take a short cut;
- If you think you are lost or if you have not seen a Check Point in 2 hours, stop! Can you retrace your steps to the last checkpoint? Can you phone Control? Note Mobile phones are allowed for this, use call boxes or Farms, we can then find you and get you back on the route without penalty, thus avoiding delay and possibly withdrawal later because of darkness. If all fails stay on a road and we will find you;
- Don't just follow the team in front, they may be on a different route, or worse, they may be rubbish at navigation! Use your map and follow your route;
- If there is no footpath, walk so as to face the oncoming traffic, this enables you to get out of the way if the driver does not see you. It is an offence to wander on any part of a Motorway.

Practice

- The Hike routes are kept confidential from you until the big day, this is to prevent 600 Scouts and Guides practising on the same footpath for months and upsetting the farmers, who over the years have been very supportive to Scouting and the Cheshire hike;
- Get out for a short hike that has plenty of turns. Try walking South and North, it is different, a 2 hour hike is better training than 10 hours indoors;
- Practice putting up your tent and camp out in it, even if it's only in your back garden. Ask yourself were you cold? Can you take it down and get it back in the bag? ;
- Use your stove to cook some food and eat it. How much harder is it when it's windy? Be very careful over your hygiene, ensure clean hands, and use a hand cleansing gel;
- Pack your own rucksack, you will have to on the Hike, know where everything goes.

Good Luck!

Cheshire Hike Team

PLEASE ENSURE ALL FORM'S ARE SIGNED.